

1999–2000 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE INDEX (API)

Questions and Answers About Growth

The Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA), signed into law in 1999, authorizes the creation of a new educational accountability system for California public schools. The primary goal is to help schools improve the academic achievement of all students.

The PSAA has three components:

- **Academic Performance Index (API)** – measures school performance, sets academic growth targets, and monitors growth over time
- **Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP)** – offers financial support to schools in need of improvement
- **Governor’s Performance Award (GPA) program** – rewards schools that show improvement or high achievement based on the API

Two additional awards programs, based on the API, also have been added:

- **Certificated Staff Performance Incentive Act (AB 1114)** – offers rewards to certificated staff in lower-performing schools that show significant improvement beyond the API growth target
- **School Site Employee Performance Bonus (SB 1667)** – provides one-time financial bonuses to employees of schools that show improvement or high achievement

The PSAA also requires the development and implementation of an Alternative Accountability System for small schools and schools that serve a non-traditional student population. At its July 2000 meeting, the State Board of Education approved the conceptual framework for this system.

Growth in the API is the central focus of the PSAA. In January 2000, schools were provided their 1999 API Base results. In October 2000, schools will receive their 2000 API Growth results. The API results from 1999 and 2000 will be compared to determine a school’s

growth. A school’s growth in the API will determine if a school may be eligible for interventions or awards.

Answers to frequently-asked questions about the PSAA, API, and the 1999–2000 API reporting cycle follow.

What is the Academic Performance Index (API)?

The Academic Performance Index (API) is the cornerstone of California’s accountability system. The purpose of the API is to measure the academic performance and growth of schools. It is a numeric index (or scale) that ranges from a low of 200 to a high of 1000. A school’s score or placement on the API is an indicator of a school’s performance level. The interim statewide API performance target for all schools is 800. A school’s growth is measured by how well it is moving toward that goal.

What are the API reporting cycles?

An API reporting cycle consists of two components: (1) base year information and (2) growth information. In a reporting cycle, an API Base is compared with a corresponding API Growth in order to determine a growth score for a school. Generally, the base year reports are provided in January of each year, and the growth reports are provided each September. A graphic display of the API reporting cycle is located on the CDE API website at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/psaa/api>.

What is included in the 1999–2000 API reporting cycle?

The 1999–2000 API reporting cycle consists of the following information:

- **1999 API Base reports** (reported in January 2000)
 - 1999 API Base—calculated from 1999 Stanford 9 results
 - State and similar schools decile ranks
 - School and subgroup growth targets

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- **1999–2000 API Growth reports** (reported in October 2000)
 - 2000 API Growth—calculated from 2000 Stanford 9 results
 - 1999 to 2000 growth
 - Whether or not the school met its growth targets and is eligible for GPA or School Site Employee Bonus

The growth decile ranks for similar schools will be available in December 2000. In future years, the API Growth reports will be available in September.

What will be included in the 2000–2001 API reporting cycle?

The 2000–2001 API reporting cycle will consist of the same type of information as the 1999–2000 cycle except that the data will cover the span from 2000–2001. The 2000 API Base reports will be provided in January 2001, and the 2000–2001 API Growth reports will be provided in September 2001. For each reporting cycle, an API Base will be calculated, incorporating any new indicators adopted by the State Board of Education. The API Growth for each cycle will be calculated in the same way as the API Base for the cycle, using the same indicators.

What does the 1999–2000 API Growth Report specifically include for each school?

The 1999–2000 API Growth Report for each school includes:

- percent of students tested in the 2000 administration of the Stanford 9
- school's 2000 API (Growth) (scale 200 to 1000)
- school's 1999 API (Base) (scale 200 to 1000)
- 1999 to 2000 growth target
- 1999 to 2000 actual growth
- 1999 to 2000 similar schools growth rank
- information on whether growth targets were met
- whether the school is eligible for the GPA and School Site Employee Bonus
- school demographic characteristics
- subgroup information

When will the 1999–2000 API Growth Reports be available?

Public reporting of the 1999–2000 API growth results is scheduled to be posted on the California Department of Education (CDE) website on October 4, 2000 at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/psaa/api>.

In the 1999–2000 API Growth Report, how was "the percent of students tested in the 2000 administration of the Stanford 9" determined?

This percent is calculated as follows:

Percent Tested = (Total Students Tested)

divided by

(Total Enrollment on First Day of Testing, grades 2–11

less

Students with Parent/Guardian Written Waiver Request

less

Students with Individualized Education Program Exemptions)

The percent tested is used as the participation rate for awards eligibility. The source of these data is the STAR 2000 Apportionment Information Report. The percent tested is rounded down to the nearest whole percent.

What is meant by a school's "growth targets"?

Growth targets include:

- **Schoolwide growth target** – the amount of improvement a school is expected to make beyond its API base score in a year. A school meets its 1999–2000 schoolwide target if (1) it meets or exceeds 5% of the distance between its 1999 API and the interim statewide performance of 800, or (2) its 2000 API is at or above 800.

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- **Comparable improvement target** – the amount of growth each numerically significant ethnic/racial and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup in the school is expected to make in a year. In most cases, a subgroup in a school meets its 1999–2000 subgroup target if it meets or exceeds 80% of the school's 1999–2000 growth target. For exact calculation of growth targets, refer to the *1999–2000 API Growth Explanatory Notes* located on the CDE website at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/psaa/api>.

How is a school's 2000 API "growth" calculated?

The 1999–2000 growth for a school is determined by subtracting its 1999 API from its 2000 API. For each numerically significant subgroup in the school, the 1999 API for the subgroup is subtracted from its 2000 API.

What was used to calculate the 1999 API and the 2000 API?

The 1999 Stanford 9 scores were used to calculate the 1999 API and the 2000 Stanford 9 scores were used for the 2000 API. Only scores for students enrolled in the district the prior year were included in the calculation for both APIs.

What is meant by a "numerically significant student subgroup"?

To be considered numerically significant, a subgroup must:

- have at least 30 students, with valid Stanford 9 scores, who make up at least 15 percent of the school's tested enrollment, **or**
- have at least 100 students with valid Stanford 9 scores.

What are the categories for the numerically significant subgroup growth?

Subgroup APIs are calculated for the following categories:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Pacific Islander
- Filipino
- Hispanic or Latino
- African American not Hispanic
- White not Hispanic
- Socioeconomically disadvantaged

What is meant by "socioeconomically disadvantaged"?

A socioeconomically disadvantaged student is defined as 1) a student neither of whose parents has received a high school diploma **or** 2) a student who participates in the free or reduced price lunch program.

Are English language learners considered a subgroup for API calculations?

English language learners (formerly called limited-English proficient students) are not considered a subgroup for API calculations.

If a subgroup at a school was numerically significant for the 1999 API but was not numerically significant for the 2000 API, will it receive a subgroup growth score?

If the school has a subgroup that was significant for the 1999 API but was not significant for the 2000 API, it will **not** receive a 1999–2000 subgroup growth score. A school's subgroup must be numerically significant in both years for the subgroup growth to be calculated.

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Will all schools receive a 1999 to 2000 growth score?

Most schools that received a 1999 API will receive a 1999 to 2000 growth score and report. In order for a school to receive the growth score and report, it must have both a 1999 and 2000 API. A school that is in the Alternative Accountability System or opened or closed between the 1998–99 and 1999–00 school years would not receive a growth score. New schools starting in September 1999 that did not receive a 1999 API will be included in the 2000–2001 API reporting cycle and will receive a 2000 API base score.

Why would a school not receive a 2000 API Growth, even though it received a 1999 API Base?

There are several reasons:

- the school existed in the 1998–99 school year but closed for the 1999–2000 school year
- the school's number of students with valid Stanford 9 test scores decreased to fewer than 100
- the school's number of students with valid Stanford 9 test scores in any content area decreased to less than 65 percent
- a charter school, classified as traditional school for the 1999 API elected to participate in the Alternative Accountability System
- the student population of the school changed so substantially that calculating a reliable growth score is not possible

What would be considered a “substantial change” in the student population of a school such that growth could not be calculated?

Examples of the types of student population changes that could substantially impact a school's API could include, but are not limited to:

- the opening of a gifted and talented magnet program on a school site
- the opening of a special education center at a school site

- the addition of a large number of students participating in a free or reduced price lunch program at a school site
- the addition of a large number of English language learners at a school site

School districts have been asked to determine whether schools in their district should not receive a growth API due to programmatic or demographic changes between the 1998–1999 and 1999–2000 school years.

Will there be district APIs and 1999 to 2000 growth scores?

No, school districts will **not** receive APIs or 1999–2000 growth scores. APIs are calculated at the school level only.

How will schools' 1999 to 2000 growth scores be ranked in December?

In December 2000, schools will be provided a 1999 to 2000 API similar schools growth rank. For this ranking, schools' 1999–2000 growth will be sorted by school type: elementary, middle, and high schools. Within each category, a school's growth will be compared to its 1999 similar schools group. For this comparison, the growth scores of the 1999 similar schools are sorted from lowest to highest and then divided into ten equal groups (or deciles) ranked from lowest (one) to highest (ten). The rank of the individual school is the decile where the school's growth score falls.

How are the school's growth targets and growth used?

Generally, if a school meets participation and growth awards criteria, it may be eligible to receive monetary or non-monetary awards through the Governor's Performance Award, Certificated Staff Performance Incentive Award, or School Site Employee Performance Bonus programs. If a school does not meet or exceed its growth targets, it may be identified for participation in the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP).

Information about the PSAA, the API, and growth can be found on the CDE website at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/psaa/api>.

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Questions and Answers About Awards

What awards are available for schools that have met their API targets?

The Governor has designated three awards programs for schools and/or school site employees during the 2000–2001 school year as part of the state's new accountability system:

- Governor's Performance Award (GPA) Program (Senate Bill 1X)
- School Site Employee Performance Bonus (Senate Bill 1667)
- Certificated Staff Performance Incentive Act (Assembly Bill 1114)

How much money has been allocated for the three API-based awards?

The state has allocated funding for the three awards as follows: GPA, \$227 million; School Site Employee Bonus, \$350 million; and Certificated Staff Incentive, \$100 million. Funding for the GPA and Certificated Staff Incentive awards is ongoing. Funding for the School Site Employee Bonus is for one year only.

What are the participation criteria to qualify for any of the three awards?

To qualify for the three API-based awards:

- Elementary and middle schools must have a 95 percent participation rate on the 2000 Stanford 9 test
- High schools must have a 90 percent participation rate on the 2000 Stanford 9 test

What are the additional eligibility criteria for the GPA and School Site Employee Bonus awards?

To qualify for the GPA and School Site Employee Bonus awards:

- The 1999–2000 growth for a school must meet or exceed its 5% growth target.

- Schools that met the state's interim performance target of 800 on the 1999 API must make at least a one point gain in 2000
- The 1999–2000 growth for each numerically significant subgroup must meet or exceed 80 percent of the school's growth target in most cases. A full description of growth targets can be found in the *1999–2000 API Growth Report Explanatory Notes* on the CDE website at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/psaa/api>.

What are additional eligibility criteria for the Certificated Staff Incentive awards?

A school must have a 1999 API in the lower half of the statewide rankings (1–5) to be eligible for this award.

In addition, to receive this award:

- The school's 1999–2000 API growth must meet or exceed two times the annual five percent growth target, which is a minimum of 10 percent of the distance between the school's 1999 API and 800.
- The 1999–2000 API growth for each numerically significant subgroup must meet or exceed 80 percent of this 10 percent growth target which is a minimum of 8 percent of the distance between the school's 1999 API and 800.
- A school must show growth between the 1998 and 1999 Stanford 9 scores.

What is meant by two times the annual growth target in the Certificated Staff Incentive criteria?

Two times the annual growth target for a school is ten percent of the distance between the school's API and the interim statewide performance target of 800. For example, a school with a 1999 API of 500 would have a 1999–2000 API growth target of 15 points. Two times the growth target would be 30, or ten percent of the distance between 500 and 800.

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Who will receive the money for these awards?

Under the GPA, schools could receive up to \$150 per student for schoolwide use. Kindergarten through twelfth grade students will be counted.

Under the School Site Employee Bonus, half of the funds are to be distributed to school site employees (certificated and classified) on an FTE basis, who were assigned to the site during the year of testing. The other half of the funds will be given to the school for schoolwide use.

Under the Certificated Staff Incentive, all school certificated staff (all site positions requiring certificated staff such as teachers and principals) will receive money for this award. Teachers with emergency credentials are included in the awards funding.

The governing board of the school district shall negotiate individual teacher and other certificated staff salary award amounts with the exclusive representative of the bargaining unit.

If school staff members have resigned from the district, do they still qualify for the School Site Employee Bonus?

Even though staff members have resigned or retired from the district, they are eligible for award funding if they were assigned to and worked at the eligible site during the year of testing.

Are itinerant staff, hourly part-time certificated teachers, long term substitutes, and non re-elect staff eligible for Certificated Staff Incentive awards?

Yes. Any certificated staff who worked at the school during the year of testing is eligible for the award. The amount that the person receives will be determined through local negotiations between the School Board and the bargaining units of teachers and other certificated staff.

How will the Certificated Staff Incentive awards money be allocated?

Schools will be ranked from highest to lowest gains based on points over their API targets. Awards will be allocated successively until the \$100 million allocated for this awards program is gone. Distribution will be as follows:

- 1,000 certificated staff in schools with the largest growth will receive \$25,000 each.
- 3,750 certificated staff will receive \$10,000 each.
- 7,500 certificated staff will receive \$5,000 each.

How and when will the awards money be distributed?

CDE will post on the Internet the API growth data for schools in October 2000. Award eligibility for the Governor's Performance Award and the School Site Employee Performance Bonus will also be announced at this time. In December 2000, the Certificated Staff Performance Incentive Act school eligibility and application process will be sent to districts. The money for the awards will be distributed some time after January 2001.

Why does the Certificated Staff Incentive award have an application process and not the other two awards?

The Certificated Staff Incentive application is required by the legislation.

Will schools be excluded from receiving awards if they have a large number of parent waivers?

Schools with a high percentage of parent waivers on Stanford 9 testing will not be excluded from receiving a reward; however, the amount of funding for the GPA will be reduced in proportion to the number of parent waivers and other students not tested in grades 2 through 11.

How will schools decide on the use of GPA and School Site Employee Bonus funds?

The use of GPA and School Site Employee Bonus funds at the school will be determined by the existing site governance team/council. The use of the funds will be ratified by the local school board.

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Can the district keep any of the awards money?

No. Although the money goes to the district, it is the district's responsibility to ensure that all of the awards money reaches each of the eligible schools.

Will the three awards be in place next year?

Currently there is ongoing funding for the GPA and Certificated Staff Incentive awards. It is not known at this time if the funding level for these two awards will remain the same next year. The School Site Employee Bonus award is a one-time bonus based on 1999–2000 growth only.

Will schools be eligible for the current awards if they are part of the Alternative Accountability System?

No. Award funds for these schools need to be appropriated through additional legislation.

Are charter schools eligible for the awards?

Charter schools that meet the criteria for the awards are eligible for all three of the awards.

Are Similar School Ranks part of the awards criteria?

No. Criteria for eligibility is based on whether or not a school meets or exceeds its Academic Performance Index, and if all numerically significant ethnic and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroups at the schools make at least 80 percent of the school's growth target.

Can a school receive all three awards?

Yes. A school could receive all three awards if it meets all of the eligibility criteria. This could include the Governor's Performance Award, the School Site Employee Performance Bonus and the Certificated Staff Performance Incentive Act. Only schools in 1999 API statewide decile ranks 1 to 5 are potentially eligible for the Certificated Staff Incentive award.

Will schools that are eligible for API-based awards be eligible for the California's Distinguished School Program?

Any school that is eligible for the API-based awards and placed in the top 5 deciles of 1999 API statewide ranking, will be eligible to apply for the California Distinguished Schools Program.

Information about the API awards programs can be found on the CDE website at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/psaa/awards>.

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Questions and Answers About Immediate Intervention/ Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP)

What are the criteria for identification and selection of II/USP schools for 2000?

For the 2000–2001 school year, schools will be identified as eligible to volunteer for II/USP if they meet all of the following criteria:

- The school is not already in II/USP.
- The school placed in the lower five deciles of the 1999 API statewide ranking.
- The school did not meet or exceed its five percent schoolwide target nor all of its numerically significant subgroup growth targets.

What happens to schools selected for II/USP in 1999 that do not meet their 1999 to 2000 API growth target?

Schools selected for II/USP in 1999 (planning year) that do not meet their 1999–2000 growth targets will continue in II/USP for the 2000–2001 school year. If these II/USP schools fail to meet their 2000–01 growth targets the first year of implementing their action plan, they will be subject to local interventions. Under local interventions, the district governing board must hold a public hearing to ensure that the school community is aware of the school's lack of progress. The governing board must then intervene in the school to help it meet its growth target. If these II/USP schools fail to meet their growth targets but show significant growth after two years of implementing their plan, they may continue in the II/USP program for another year. However, if these II/USP schools fail to meet their growth targets and do not show significant growth after two years of implementing their plan, they will be subject to state sanctions.

What happens to schools that are not in II/USP and do not meet their 1999–2000 growth target?

Schools that are not in II/USP and do not meet their 1999–2000 growth target may be eligible for II/USP beginning in the 2000–2001 school year.

Information about the II/USP can be found on the CDE website at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/iiusp>

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Questions and Answers About Alternative Accountability System

What types of schools are included the Alternative Accountability System?

Schools that have fewer than 100 students with valid Stanford 9 scores, along with special education schools and centers and alternative, continuation, community day, court, community, and opportunity schools serving high-risk student populations participate in the Alternative Accountability System. The State Board of Education in July 2000 approved the framework for the Alternative Accountability System.

What does the Alternative Accountability System framework include and when will it be implemented?

The Alternative Accountability System framework identifies three separate accountability models to be implemented over a three-year period:

- Small schools model (schools serving traditional student populations with fewer than 100 valid Stanford 9 scores)
- Special education schools and centers model
- Alternative schools accountability model (schools serving high-risk student populations)

What is the small schools model?

In the small schools model, an API with an asterisk will be provided to schools with 11 to 99 valid Stanford 9 scores. The asterisk is designed to acknowledge the greater statistical uncertainty of an API based on fewer than 100 scores. The API with asterisk will begin with the 2000–2001 API reporting cycle. Small schools with fewer than 11 valid scores will participate in the alternative schools accountability model.

What is the special education schools and centers model?

The special education schools and centers model encompasses the current Quality Assurance Process, the annual Individualized Education Program (IEP) review and three-year evaluation process, and developmental work. Recommendations for this model will be based on review of the new alternative assessment and key Performance Indicators which will go to the State Board in the fall of 2001.

What is the alternative schools accountability model?

The alternative schools accountability model includes alternative schools serving high-risk student populations, continuation schools, disciplinary alternative schools, non-special education residential schools or juvenile detention centers, and schools serving students with fewer than 11 valid Stanford 9 test scores. Under this model, schools will report achievement of goals on STAR and on each of several indicators approved by the State Board in January 2001. This model will be implemented starting with the 2001–02 school year.

Can schools in the Alternative Accountability System opt to participate in the main accountability system?

Beginning with the 2000–2001 reporting cycle, schools that are identified as “alternative” for the purposes of the Alternative Accountability System will have the option of participating in the main accountability system if they have 100 or more valid Stanford 9 scores. They can opt to participate in the small schools model if they have 11 to 99 valid scores.

Can a school identified as “alternative” for the purposes of the Alternative Accountability System opt to participate in the main accountability system for one year and then return to the Alternative Accountability System the next year?

No. Schools that have opted for the main accountability system must stay with that system for three years.

How does a kindergarten only or K–1 school fit in the accountability system?

A kindergarten only or K–1 school is included in the Alternative Accountability System.

Information about the Alternative Accountability System can be found on the CDE website at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/psaa/api> or by contacting the Educational Options Office at (916) 322-5012.